

TIMES AND TRAILS

People, Projects and Priorities at Environment and Conservation

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July 2005

In Vision

Environment and Conservation employees:

Meeting members of our staff in environmental field offices and state parks across Tennessee, I am constantly reminded how the department's work directly connects to the quality of life in our communities. Specifically, I see how the work you do to protect the environment has a direct impact on improving the health of citizens, friends, families, visitors and future generations.

At the core of our environmental regulatory responsibilities, the department is busy evaluating, permitting, monitoring and ensuring compliance with standards set for our state's air, land and water. Caring for these natural resources is essential to creating a place where all our citizens can fulfill their greatest potential and live in a healthy and protected environment.

As I meet with outside audiences, I have been pleased to hear the recognition of environmental accountability from those we regulate. Paul Sloan and I recently shared remarks at a Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) meeting. We both stressed our environmental performance expectations for Tennessee businesses, and the companies in attendance seemed ready to accept this challenge.

I am grateful our department also supports so many outreach efforts that enable our communities to be more aware and effective in taking action to address environmental issues. From this summer's watershed quality assessment meetings to grants for solid waste assistance, recycling, used oil or recreation, we are continually helping Tennessee communities care for their environment. I believe the new Office of Environmental Assistance in the Bureau of Environment will help us enhance our outreach and education efforts with important groups like small

businesses and local governments.

Many of you may have heard me say this before, but I think it's important and it demonstrates the absolute link between the two branches of our department — environment and conservation. If we don't have clean air, we can't enjoy the beautiful vistas we have in Tennessee. If we don't have clean water, we can't enjoy the recreational opportunities on lakes like Tims Ford and rivers like the Ocoee and Hiwassee. And if we don't protect the land from pollution, future generations won't have the benefit of all the special places we enjoy across Tennessee like Fall Creek Falls, Roan Mountain and Reelfoot Lake.

And I never forget that Tennessee State Parks offer such great value when it comes to enhancing the health of our citizens. Activities, trails, games and adventure abound at our 54 state parks. Whether someone is a high performance athlete seeking a competitive challenge or a regular walker counting on the benefits of daily exercise, our parks system offers the best combination of fitness and good nature you can find.

Our ability to sustain Tennessee's high quality of life is directly linked to the health of our communities and our environment. I am proud our department has so many dedicated employees committed to serving citizens through cleaner air, purer water, better-protected land and expanded recreational opportunities. The actions we take today will make a difference in the health and well being of Tennessee's future generations.



Commissioner Jim Fyke

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "J" and a simple "im".

Spotlight on Recreation Education Services

The Division of Recreation Education Services (RES) offers technical, planning and financial assistance services to state, local and private providers of public recreation. The division has three sections: Recreation and Planning Resources, Land Management and Funding Resources, and Administrative.

The Recreation Resources and Planning Section is responsible for maintaining Tennessee's eligibility to receive federal Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds and for enhancing state and local recreation planning efforts. The section develops the Statewide Recreation Plan, which is designed to be a framework for recreation planning at all levels of government. The plan requires diversified public input and an advisory committee for the enhancement of Tennessee's recreation systems.

The Recreation Planning staff assists RES and the Grants Section with data, on-site planning assistance, maps, assessment of demands for recreation activity, special needs requirements and other related items. The section also serves as the focal point for the recreation Geographic Information System

program as it coordinates, collects, records, and distributes information regarding recreation services available to the public.

Additionally, this section offers technical support through the Parks and Recreation Technical Assistance Service (PARTAS). These support services range from tips on playground safety compliance to assistance with greenways and trails.

Land Management and Funding Resources is responsible for administering federal and state grant programs to local and state governments. The division manages the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) Grant Program, the Natural Resources Trust Fund (NRTF) and the Recreation Trails Program (RTP). The division works closely with the Department of Agriculture, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and the Department of Transportation and other state agencies and local recreation providers. The Lands Management section also oversees the department's land database and maps. This section also facilitates the State Lands Acquisition Committee, which administers the State Lands Acquisition Fund.

The Five-Year State Recreation Plan 2003 - 2008

Published in 2003, the plan is a comprehensive study of Tennessee's existing recreation assets, as well as a vision for future recreation development throughout the state. The 40-member Tennessee Recreation Advisory Committee (TRAC) developed the plan. TRAC is comprised of Cabinet-level policy makers and career recreation professionals representing 21 federal, state and local agencies, as well as prominent recreation and conservation activists representing six major organizations. The information and public input gathered for the report came from many sources including the National Survey of Recreation and Conservation (NSRE), public workshops, needs survey of local agencies, and TRAC.

"This plan will serve as a magnet for all recreation providers to join together in establishing a statewide seamless system of parks, recreation and conservation that benefits all interests, enhances open space and protects sensitive areas," said Commissioner Jim Fyke. "It is our goal to place a significant emphasis on maintaining what we have, while prioritizing the needs of new recreation and park facilities and sites."

The plan is available on-line at www.state.tn.us/environment/recreation/plan/ or you may request a hard copy from Ella Buntin at ella.buntin@state.tn.us





Times and Trails recently talked with The Division of Recreation Education Services Director Mark Tummons.

Q: You recently became director of Recreation Education Services. What direction do you see RES moving towards, and what goals for the future would you like to see implemented?



*Mark Tummons,
Director*

One emphasis for the division is assisting the governor, commissioner and Heritage Trust Fund Commission with the full implementation of the land and water initiative while continuing to provide quality grant services to state and local recreation providers. At a time when federal and state dollars are limited and each dollar is scrutinized, we must make sure that all dollars are used in the most effective way possible. Our staff is committed to doing just that, from assisting communities in the pre-grant process to their final reimbursement. Our goal is helping grant applicants and recipients in order to provide the highest quality recreation facilities possible.

Another focus is maintaining the strong, professional staff that we currently have and adding staff as opportunities arise. We recently hired a State Greenways and Trails Coordinator in partnership with TDOT. This person will have a huge impact on the future of local, state and federal efforts, especially focusing on the GIS aspects and the linkage of these trails into a seamless system from one end of the state to another. It is also one of my goals to secure another Parks and Recreation Technical Advisory Service (PARTAS) staff member to assist with carrying out the five-year State Recreation Plan, focusing on the development of the next Plan in 2008, providing a higher level of assistance to communities and developing key publications to for recreation providers.

Another goal is to continue fostering partnerships with many agencies across the board. We have fragmented ourselves, unaware of what others were doing to foster growth, ideas and concepts. Through effective and continual communication, it is my desire to break down some of those barriers that hinder us. I want us to realize that supporting one another, learning from one another and collaborating with each other is a key to making this thing work. New ground has been broken with agencies like TDOT, TVA and ECD. It will be exciting to see what can happen and what will happen.

Q: The Statewide Five-Year State Recreation Plan is very ambitious and contains a wealth of information and recommendations. What are some of the ways the plan is moving Tennessee's recreation facilities forward?

One the biggest comes under the heading of "making the most of what we have." In particular the plan promoted the establishment of the Recreational Development Corridors. Organizations have begun supporting these corridors, including the Cumberland Plateau, the Tennessee River the Mississippi River, the Appalachian and the Middle Tennessee/I-65 corridors, identified in the state plan. These support groups combine with state efforts to pursue various options to protect lands through acquisition, donation or conservation easement. Land acquisition and preservation received a high priority in the five-year State Recreation Plan.

The second primary objective "set aside recreation resources for the future" is making great strides. The Governor's Land and Water initiative, which will focus initially on the Cumberland Plateau is designed to do just that. A wide range of organizations such as land trusts, private organizations, TVA, Corps of Engineers, TWRA, and Forestry are all working to make this objective a reality.

A third emphasis has been the renovation and maintenance of state and local recreation facilities. State and local providers understand there have to be dollars in future years to maintain recreational facilities in a pleasing and safe manner.

Continued on next page

Q: How much grant money is annually dispersed through RES? How closely are grants administered with the plan in mind?

The figure varies because of changes to budgeted federal and state dollars for such programs. Our grants are on a two-year cycle and approximately \$8 million is available every other year. One of the biggest questions we receive is regarding how we score the applications fairly and equitably. We developed a scoring process known as the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) that provides an objective review of each application against the criteria rather than against other grant applicants. A small community such as Manchester has the same opportunity to receive a high score as a larger urban area such as Metro Nashville. In 2006 we are going to add a second component called a Grant Decision Matrix that will take into account some other variables such as “does the project meet or exceed specific goals as identified in the five-year State Recreation Plan.”

Q: President Bush plans to end the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program in 2006. If this proposal is passed, how will it affect Tennessee’s recreation facilities?

We receive about \$1.5 million annually from the federal government through LWCF. While this may not seem like much, these dollars have gone a long way since its inception in 1964. Tennessee has nearly 800 sites that have benefited from this program in the last 40 years. Presently we are using \$1.3 million LWCF to match \$1.3 million of Iris Fund money for rehabilitation projects in 48 State Parks. Projects include cabin refurbishment, dam replacement, marina enhancements and many other projects that are a part of a backlog of needs. We are using another \$1.4 million as matching funds for donated properties to acquire several more tracts of ecologically sensitive, public recreation lands. That’s nearly \$5 million making a big impact. If LWCF has met its end, I am hopeful that another piece of legislation will be enacted to provide similar dollars for similar projects.

RES is prepared administratively for the potential demise of LWCF through our recent consolidation of grant programs. We will remain in close contact with our federal agency partners to minimize any disruption from changes in Washington.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share?

I think our department, especially on the Parks and Conservation side, has a five to six year window of opportunity that we may never have had before and may never see again. We are thankful to our governor and commissioner for their strong support for increased conservation, protection and enhanced recreation opportunities. And the strong efforts we, as both a division and a department, put into this “window of opportunity” will create both immediate benefits and a legacy to last long after we are gone. I believe we have the chance to set the tone for future generations.

Tennessee State Parks Finalist for National Award

Tennessee State Parks is one of four state parks systems nationwide selected as a finalist for the National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Park Recreation Management. The awards measure excellence in long-range planning, resource management, citizen support systems, environmental stewardship, program and professional development, and agency recognition.

As a finalist for the NRPA Gold Medal Awards, the department had to submit a video highlighting Tennessee State Parks. A panel of five parks and recreation professionals reviews and judges all application materials. Tennessee is competing against state parks systems from Florida, North Carolina and Missouri as Gold Medal finalists. The national award winner will be announced at NRPA’s annual conference in October. For more information about NRPA’s Gold Medal Awards, visit their Web site at www.nrpa.org/awards/.

The State Parks video was produced in-house by Tisha Calabrese, Deputy Director of Communications. The video will be available for viewing in the near future on the TDEC Web site. For more information about Tisha, check out the “In-Step” article in this month’s issue.

Department holds public Watershed Assessment Meetings across the State

This summer the division of Water Pollution Control is conducting a series of eight watershed quality assessment meetings across the state to update the public on the health of their watershed, to solicit comments and concerns and to discuss water quality activities in their area. These meetings are part of the department's Watershed Management Approach that focuses on water quality goals and the ecological integrity of our state's watersheds. All of the state's 54 watersheds have been placed into one of five groups that operate on five-year management cycles. Different activities of watershed planning, development, management and assessment are scheduled for each group every year depending on where the group falls within the five-year cycle. This summer's watershed quality assessment meetings are being held for Group One, which includes the Watauga River in East

Tennessee, Stones River in Middle Tennessee to Nonconna River in West Tennessee. Learn more about the Watershed Approach at: www.state.tn.us/environment/wpc/watershed/



Water Pollution Control staff at recent watershed quality assessment meeting for the Harpeth River in Franklin. (l-r) David Duhl, Joey Holland, Sherry Wang, Annie Goodhue, Ann Rochelle, Barbara Loudermilk and Pam Davee of the Harpeth River Watershed Association.

"In Step"

What is your position at TDEC?

Deputy Communications Director. I work out of the Knoxville Environmental Field Office.

What does that involve?

I work with Dana Coleman, Communications Director, to coordinate media requests and to help get information to the media/public about the department. I primarily take the lead on East Tennessee issues. Since my background is television news, I've had the opportunity to produce two videos for the department — one on air quality and the other on the state parks system.

How long have you worked at TDEC?

Since March 2004

What is one thing your fellow TDEC employees probably don't know about you?

I moved here with no intention of staying and no idea how much I would love it. I'm from New Jersey originally. I moved to Knoxville in 2000 from Milwaukee to take an executive producer position at a local television station. I figured I would fulfill my three-year contract and move to a bigger TV market. As I was coming down I-75 for the first time I found bluegrass on the radio and I knew I was home. I've always loved hiking and rock climbing and once I was here I discovered whitewater kayaking. I met my husband on the river. I think we'll be in Tennessee for quite some time!

What is your favorite dessert?

That's a hard question when dessert is your favorite meal of the day — there are so many of them. I really like coconut cream pie.

What do you enjoy most about working for TDEC?

I believe in what I'm doing and the people I'm doing it with. It doesn't get much better than that.

If you could change one thing about TDEC, what would that be?

The way some outside people perceive the department. I have found that people work here by and large because they are environmentalists doing real public service. I have been so impressed with the level of expertise and dedication in this department and that's not always fairly or accurately portrayed. Just know that the communications team is here to help you and we are working hard to represent you well!



Tisha Calabrese

Welcome New Employees

Scott Andrews joined the department on July 1 as **Web Director**. He comes to TDEC with more than five years experience in the production group at the on line version of *the Tennessean* newspaper. Scott will be leading the TDEC Web team of Debbie Ownby-McManus, web developer, and Preston Carter, web programmer, as they build the department's internet and intranet capabilities. TDEC has one of the busiest internet sites in state government, averaging approximately 500,000 page views a month.



Scott Andrews

Bob Richards was recently named **Greenways and Trails Coordinator** in the Division of Recreation Educational Services (RES). Richards will direct the statewide greenways and trails program administered within the Division and coordinate the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) grant program while assisting state, regional, and local agencies in the development of greenways and trails. He is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), involved in the park and recreation field for over 29 years. Bob is returning to the department where he has more than 20 years previous experience serving in various supervisor and project roles involving state trails, conservation and recreation activities.



Bob Richards

WPC's Wanda Smith Earns Award for Money Saving Idea

Wanda Smith, Nashville Environmental Field Office, is a recipient of the State Employee Suggestion Award for her recommendation that will save the division approximately \$6,200 annually. The suggestion was to include the Project Acreage Fee Amounts on the Notice of Intent (NOI) instruction form. The fees were available in several different places, but not on the form, which resulted in confusion and miscalculation of fees for people applying for storm water discharge permits. Wanda's suggestion has resulted in a more efficient and customer friendly process for both the public and the division. Congratulations Wanda!

July Service Anniversaries

5 Years

Carol Smithson, Montgomery Bell State Park
John Willoughby, T.O. Fuller State Park
Joyce Atchison, Fiscal Services
Mary Parkman, Office of the General Counsel
Roger Blankenship, Natchez Trace State Park
Roy Carroll, Cumberland Mountain State Park
Veronica Greear, Panther Creek State Park

10 Years

Chris Cole, Big Ridge State Park
Jerry Owens, Norris Dam State Park
Jim Brannon, Fort Loudoun State Park
LinnAnn Welch, State Parks
Lonnie Ezell, Big Ridge State Park
Rita Swett, Solid Waste Management
Mark Houston, Cumberland Mountain State Park

15 Years

Jeff Cales, Air Pollution Control, Cookeville EFO
Buddy Kelly, Fiscal Services
Chuck Johnson, Radiological Health, Knoxville EFO

20 Years

Robert Young, Radiological Health
Ken Tester, Davy Crockett Birthplace State Park

25 Years

Harry Foster, Paris Landing State Park
Mark Morgan, Norris Dam State Park
Roger Parks, TSP Facilities, Knoxville
Wilford Holmes, Big Hill Pond State Park
Beth Walker, Water Supply, Knoxville EFO
Marty Gregory, Air Pollution Control

30 Years

Carolyn Williams, Commissioner's Office
Quincy Styke III, Air Pollution Control

35 Years

Ron Culberson, Air Pollution Control

Recognizing Staff on Military Leave

The department has three employees serving our country in the Middle East. We want to recognize these individuals and look forward to their safe return home.

Robert Nakamoto, Environmental Protection Specialist, Solid Waste Management, Central Office

Scott Mitchell, Environmental Specialist, Division of Groundwater, Cookeville Environmental Field Office

Dwight Key, Conservation Worker, Tims Ford State Park

Fall Creek Falls State Park Harnesses the Internet for Energy Management

The managers at Fall Creek Falls State Park know exactly how much electricity was used at the park yesterday, and they didn't have to leave their offices to read a meter. All they did was turn on their computer and log into a Web site provided by the local electric utility, Sequachee Valley Electric.

The monitoring system will allow Fall Creek Falls managers to track their energy consumption to ensure efficiency. And with recent lighting and cooling improvements as well as the purchase of green power, energy efficiency at the park is getting even better.

The solution is a Web based energy information service provided by Automated Energy. Information goes directly from the meter to the Internet by phone line. Sequachee Valley Electric is one of the first electric utilities in Tennessee to bring Web based information services to its customers, following the lead of Nashville Electric Service, which started its PowerTracker program a few years ago.

Panther Creek State Park a First

Panther Creek State Park is the first in the state park system to buy biodiesel fuel for use in its diesel vehicles. Panther Creek currently operates six diesel vehicles, including mowers, a Bobcat loader, a tractor and a dump truck.

"The use of alternative fuels is one of the things we're doing to be good stewards of our natural environment," said Park Manager John LeCroy. "We have taken other measures as well, such as installing timers on lights, to increase our energy efficiency for environmental and financial benefits"

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced. ~ James Baldwin

Correction:

In the June issue, an item in Did You Know should have read: There are 536,794 publicly-owned lake acres in Tennessee.

Fulcher named Ranger of the Year

The Tennessee Park Rangers Association has honored Bob Fulcher, manager of Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail, with the Ranger of the Year Award for Tennessee State Parks. In presenting the award, the association recognized Fulcher for his continuing contributions to the development of the Cumberland Trail, as well as important work for the preservation of Tennessee's unique cultural history.



Bob Fulcher

As manager of Tennessee's first linear state park, Fulcher and his staff are helping to facilitate the development of the Cumberland Trail while also managing the completed portions. When finished, the Cumberland Trail will stretch nearly 340 miles along the Cumberland Plateau from Georgia to Kentucky. It will connect and preserve beautiful and ecologically significant areas including Laurel Snow, Black Mountain, Frozen Head and the Cumberland Gap.

Development of the Cumberland Trail is being accomplished with state and federal money, along with significant contribution and cooperation from volunteers and private groups.

The Tennessee Park Rangers Association also recognized Fulcher for his outstanding contributions in the field of folklore and cultural preservation. Thousands of hours of recordings of old songs and stories are preserved in the National Library and Archives due to his work in gathering the material from old timers from across Tennessee.

Fulcher was instrumental in organizing the Folk Area at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tenn., and in the presentation of Tennessee's cultural heritage at the Smithsonian Institute Festival of American Folklife on the mall in Washington, D.C., in 1986.

Bob Fulcher is a resident of Clinton, Tenn. He has been with Tennessee State Parks full time since 1977 and became park manager for the Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail five years ago.

State Parks and Staff winners of Environmental Stewardship Awards

Randy Whitworth, park manager of Henry Horton State Park, and Panther Creek State Park were selected as winners of the Excellence in Parks and Recreation Award and the Excellence in Aquatic Resource Preservation Award respectively.

They will be recognized at the Tennessee Environmental Stewardship Awards ceremony on July 29th along with 10 other winners from across the state for exemplary achievements in conservation stewardship. Congratulations to all! Full details will appear in the August issue of *Times and Trails*.

Tennesseans Needed for Online Wildlife Conservation Survey

Tennessee is one of the most bio-diverse states in the United States. Currently there are 315 species of fish, 77 mammals, 56 reptiles, 70 amphibians, 355 snails, 77 mussels and over 340 different birds known to inhabit or migrate through Tennessee. Traditionally, all these species have benefited from the management practices paid for by Tennessee hunters and anglers from the collection of federal excise taxes on outdoor equipment and state hunting and fishing license fees.

In 2001, recognition of the lack of conservation funding for non-game species led the United States Congress to pass the Wildlife Conservation and Reinvestment Act (WCRP). This act provides conservation funding for these non-game species through State Wildlife Grants (SWG). Tennessee is projected to receive approximately one million dollars for SWGs in 2005-2006.

To ensure that programs funded by SWGs maximize the benefits to these non-game species, Congress has mandated that all states must complete a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) survey by October 1, 2005. This CWCS

addresses the management needs of non-game species and their associated habitats.

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) is currently collecting feedback regarding the Tennessee Wildlife Conservation Strategy. If you would like to participate and take the survey, you may do so at: www.state.tn.us/twra/wildlife/cwcs/cwcsindex.html



An Invitation to Breast Cancer Survivors from First Lady Andrea Conte

First Lady Andrea Conte will be hosting a special reception in honor of Breast Cancer Survivors. Planned in conjunction with Breast Cancer Awareness month the event will be held in Nashville on October 7th at the Maxwell House Hotel. Breast Cancer Survivors who are employed in the department who wish to participate are invited to do so and will be individually honored at the event by the First Lady and Commissioner Fyke. You may bring your family and guests. The deadline to RSVP for this special event is Friday, August 12.

To RSVP or for more information contact Faye Chiles at faye.chiles@state.tn.us

BRAT is Back



The BRAT is a challenging 300+ mile bicycle tour that explores a different area of Tennessee each September. In 2005 the ride is celebrating its 16th year, and will explore the plateaus and valleys of Southeast Tennessee. Along the way, riders will camp in state parks and other selected green spaces. Proceeds from this year's tour will support the Cumberland Trail

Conference (CTC). The CTC is dedicated to the creation and preservation of the Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail. The deadline for registering is Friday, September 9, 2005. Registration is limited to 350 cyclists. Riders who cannot ride the entire week are welcome to participate. Registration forms for daily riders and week long riders are available at:

www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/BRAT/

Archaeology Digs New Space

The Division of Archaeology has a new home as of February 28, 2005. After 30+ years inside a converted warehouse adjacent to the Ellington Agricultural Center, the division moved its operations to the TPS Complex campus on Foster Avenue. Nostalgic feelings for the old warehouse were short-lived upon moving into the new office space. Division operations now occupy an administration building with windows, a laboratory building with windows, and secure warehouse storage space.

Director Nick Fielder states, "I would like to express my appreciation to Commissioner Fyke and the countless other TDEC staff members for their hard work to make this move a reality." He also notes "staff morale has never been higher since moving into our new office space."



Nick Fielder, Director, at home in the new office space

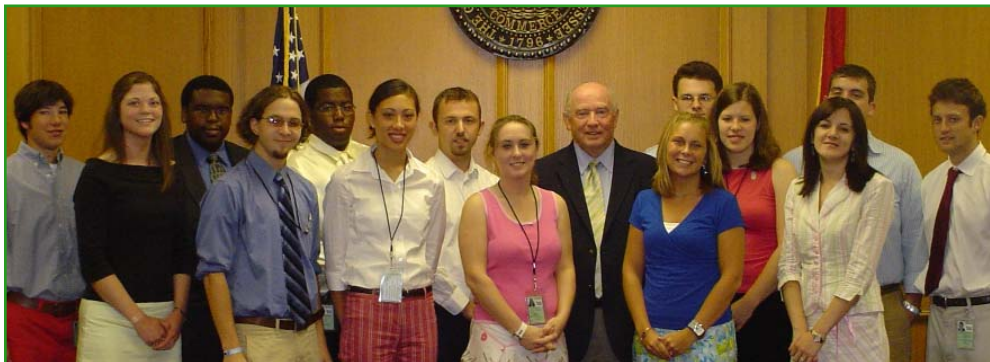
Times and Trails

Commissioner thanks Big Dig Volunteers at Soddy Daisy

Commissioner Fyke recently made the trip to Dogwood Camp outside Soddy Daisy to thank the volunteers who participated in the Big Dig 2005. Volunteers from all walks of life and around the country worked almost everyday in the Possum and Soddy Creek gorges of northern Hamilton County between May 22 and June 25, adding a number of new miles to the Cumberland Trail. More than 20 department staff also participated during Big Dig 2005.

"I am always impressed by the energy and spirit of the volunteers building the Cumberland Trail," said Commissioner Fyke. "I know this year's trailblazing efforts along the slopes above Soddy-Daisy have been some of the hardest work in the three years of doing the Big Dig. Our department is grateful for all the volunteer contributions that continue moving us toward completion of the Cumberland Trail." This year's trail construction activities were focused on the

Big Dig volunteers gather for a group photo. The Cumberland Trail is featured as part of Tennessee State Parks' video entry as a finalist for the 2005 National Parks and Recreation Gold Medal Award.



Commissioner Fyke recently took time to share a department overview with the summer interns working in the Constitutional Offices at the Tennessee State Capitol.

People, Projects and Priorities



Commissioner Fyke (middle) with Cumberland Trail Big Dig Coordinator Mark Stanfill, Cumberland Trail Park Ranger Andy Wright, Ray Haley, and Assistant Commissioner Mike Carlton.

Possum and Soddy Creek Gorges. The work included creating switchbacks and rock steps in some rugged and steep terrain, sometimes slowed by challenging rock fields that required intense labor to create a hikeable path.

The Big Dig is coordinated by the Cumberland Trail Conference (CTC), through a partnership with Tennessee State Parks. When the Cumberland Trail is complete, it will reach well over 300 miles, from the Tennessee River gorge near Chattanooga to the Cumberland Gap at the Tennessee-Kentucky line. Over 160 miles of trail are now on the ground, making the trail about halfway finished.

The Great Goose Roundup

Employees at TDEC's Department of Energy Oversight office in Oak Ridge have a number of unusual tasks. One of the more bizarre jobs is the annual goose round up. A WHAT, you might ask? Actually, it is exactly what it sounds like... the staff rounds up Canadian geese living on or near the Oak Ridge Reservation.

Like many other locations around the U.S., the plants on the Oak Ridge Reservation have their fair share of Canadian geese. The main difference is that since these facilities were used to produce nuclear weapons, there is the possibility that the geese could be contaminated with radioactive material found at the various facilities. Because of this possibility, some geese from each site are rounded up each year. The gender of some of the geese is determined and they are banded while others receive a full body count to check for gamma radiation. Some of the geese are released at off-site locations, while others are released immediately after banding them and determining their gender.



The geese are banded and sexed. DOE-O's John Peryam adds a numbered band to the leg of a Canadian goose.



Some geese are driven off for a full body gamma count.



Others leave the scene with a hop, skip and a jump once they are released.

Feeling left out?

If you have trouble opening the *Times and Trails* Newsletter, or know someone who has trouble, please let us know. We will be glad to add you to our mailing list. You will receive every monthly edition of *Times and Trails*, as well as any Special Edition issues. Email us at: tdecimes@state.tn.us

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